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The Leamington Society Newsletter

February 2015

Chairman's Notes

Submission of WDC Local Plan

At its meeting on 28th January Warwick District Council approved a Submission Draft of the Local Plan, by 25 votes to 10, with one abstention. The next step will be an examination in public of the Plan by a government appointed inspector, perhaps in April or May.

Before the meeting, WDC issued a short paper listing "Key Issues" concerning the Plan. These included: the Housing Requirement, Duty to Cooperate (with neighbouring councils), Distribution of Development, Provision of Infrastructure, as well as Traffic and Transport.

The Council has taken no account of the new ONS housing projections for the district published last May. Instead it has issued a consultant's report, based mainly on aggregate figures including Coventry plus neighbouring districts. The implicit assumption is that Warwick District is to provide substantially for Coventry's big increase in numbers – even though Coventry City Council has yet to make such a request.

Leamington only grew in the last two centuries, with limited historic boundaries, so most of the Plan's housing expansion will fall technically within Warwick, Bishop's Tachbrook and Whitnash. But be in no doubt that the impact on Leamington will be severe. We share the grave concerns of the Warwick Society and adjoining parishes regarding infrastructure, traffic and pollution. The Leamington Society has already responded with considerable evidence to WDC consultations; at the public inspection of the Local Plan we will argue that key aspects of the Plan are unsound.

Gateway refusal

The application for the Gateway development, supported by both WDC and Coventry City Council, was rejected by the Inspector and this was confirmed by the Secretary of State, Eric Pickles. In a 240 page report, the Inspector found the economic rationale for the development to be strong, but outweighed by the fact that the development would occupy a very large swathe of Green Belt.

Talks

Bandstands

Paul Rabbitts

Thursday, March 12th, 7.30
Conference Centre, Dormer Place

Joint with Warwick Society

The Role of the Police and Crime

Commissioner

Ron Ball

Tuesday, April 14th, 7.30
Lord Leicester Hospital, Warwick

AGM

Thursday, May 14th, 7.00 pm
Christchurch, Priory Terrace, CV31 1BA
Formal, business, followed by
refreshments and an update on the
Pump Room Gardens project

The inspector concluded that any decision on the Green Belt should wait for examination of the Local Plan.

The WDC Draft Local Plan, to be inspected soon, proposes that this land be a sub-regional employment site and no longer designated as Green Belt. If the inspector agrees to this, a renewed Gateway application will surely be submitted.

“To Let” Signs

The streets of Leamington's Old Town and the town's Conservation Area have increasingly been cluttered with estate agents' letting boards. “To Let” boards stay on properties already fully occupied and remain simply as advertising.

One of our members, Gordon Fyfe, has lobbied planning and enforcement officers over many months to ensure that current regulations are applied. At the recent District Council meeting, another member, Cllr. Jerry Weber, put forward a motion to consider stricter control of these signs.

The concentration of these boards disfigures the street scene, as well as labelling them as 'student' areas; according to the Students Union their homes become targets for burglary. In any case prospective tenants and students seeking accommodation mainly use the Internet, a situation admitted by one estate agent on local radio.

There was unanimous support for the motion; councillors and officers will now examine how to restrict these boards through regulation, which have already been adopted by other local authorities with large student populations such as Nottingham and Brighton.

Back to the Future

Several years ago Wright Hassall solicitors moved out of town to large corporate premises off Europa Way. Their grand old Regency frontage on the corner of Waterloo Place has been looking sad and waiting for a new life. No doubt the interior was not ideal as a modern office space and now it is returning to its original function as town housing. The nine flats will not be cheap, but will restore the building and contribute to the town centre.

May 2015: New District Council

Politics and politicians are widely regarded as a turn-off, but it cannot have escaped your attention that a general election is in the offing – on Thursday 7th May. On that same day a new council will also be elected for Warwick District, as well as town and parish councils.

Overall WDC will remain at the same size with 46 councillors. For simplicity this brief summary is confined to Leamington, which will again be represented by 16 district councillors, but elected from eight wards (up from six) each with just two councillors. This has been achieved by moving boundaries, and creating two new wards.

North of the river there is to be a new ward called Newbold, To accommodate this, Manor and Milverton wards have been reduced from three to two councillors each; Crown continues with two, as does Clarendon in the centre of town although with much altered boundaries.

In the south, there is to be a new ward called Sydenham; to accommodate this Brunswick is reduced from three to two councillors, as is Willes, however Willes is being re-named as Leam ward.

A new Leamington Town Council will also be elected on 7th May, based on similar wards and also with a total of 16 councillors, the same number as before. Most of the polling stations will probably

Good news for Leamington's much loved bandstand

The undercroft has been opened up after being bricked up for perhaps half a century. Surveyors have reported that it needs remedial work to make it usable. We do not know yet what this would cost. Headroom is about 5' 8" (or 1725 mm). The space is damp (not surprising as it was bricked up), but not significantly wet and would be invaluable for storing seating for visiting bands; modern sound equipment and storage of the downright ugly electric boxes disfiguring the outside of the bandstand

Remember that Paul Rabbitts, UK's expert on bandstands is talking on his favourite subject at St Peter's Conference Centre on Thursday March 12th, 7.30. Check his website www.paulrabbitts.co.uk. He is not only enthusiastic for seeing surviving ones restored, but used again for their original purpose.



Bandstand undercroft

Roger Charters

Survey

The Friends of the Pump Room Gardens conducted a survey of users of the gardens over 10 weeks, closing at the end of January with over 350 responses. These are now being analysed. Our thanks to everyone who completed the survey. An initial inspection shows that the top priority is the restoration of the bandstand and its use for musical events. A Wi-Fi hotspot nearby is also being investigated.

The project must live within its budget so some aspirations may not be possible, but the scheme is truly exciting.

Archie Pitts, Chairman, Friends of Pump Room Gardens



The Leamington Society

February 2015

Notice is hereby given that the Sixtieth **Annual General Meeting** of the Leamington Society will be held on **Thursday, 14th of May 2015, starting at 7.00, in ChristChurch, Priory Terrace, Leamington Spa, CV31 1BA.**

Richard Ashworth, Chairman

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 59th Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 8th of May 2014
3. Matters arising from the Minutes not included elsewhere
4. To receive reports from the Chairman and Sub Committees
5. To receive the independently examined Accounts of the Society for 2014 - 2015
6. Election of Officers:
Chairman, Vice Chairmen, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer
7. Election of four Committee Members
8. Election of Independent Examiner
9. Any other Business.

PLEASE NOTE: **Nominations** of candidates for Officers and Committee must be forwarded to the **Chairman not later than Thursday, 23rd April 2015**. Any voting will be by Secret Ballot at the Meeting.

Any motions for consideration at the meeting should also be received by this date. Nominations or motions will **not** be accepted at the Meeting. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Chairman.

If there is to be an election or if any motion is received, notice will be sent to members seven days before the Annual General Meeting.

After the conclusion of formal business of the AGM we will break for refreshments after which Archie Pitts will speak give an update on progress on the project to restore the Pump Room Gardens